Teaching & Learning Policy

Inspire – Impact - Independence

OAKWOOD ACADEMY MISSION STATEMENT

"Promoting learning excellence – Inclusion beyond the barriers".

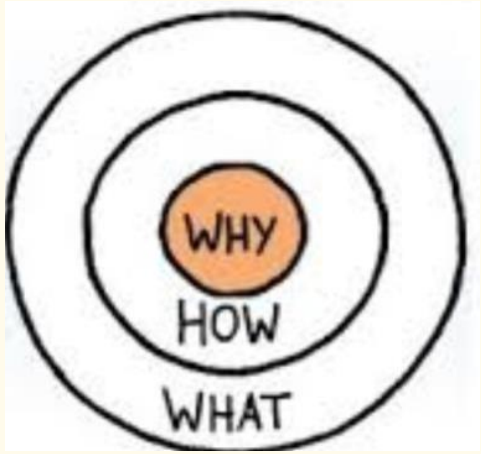
Moral Purpose

"We are united in the belief that together we can inspire all learners to dream, persevere and achieve so that we can change lives for the better, now and for future generations to come"

Policy developed by:	Jack Ellis (Deputy Headteacher – Foundation) and Joanne McQueen (Deputy Headteacher – Core)
Policy to be reviewed:	Summer 2027 (annually)
Summary of changes:	**Summary of Changes – September 2026** Adoption of the Trust Teaching & Learning Framework and accompanying booklet as our shared pedagogical approach, replacing the previous lesson structure. Introduction of StepLab as our evidence-informed professional development model, initially focusing on Group Professional Development. Updated curriculum principles, strengthening the emphasis on foundational skills, adaptive teaching and inclusion. Introduction of a Quality Assurance and Continuous Improvement framework to inform professional development and school improvement priorities. Clarification of staff roles and responsibilities in implementing and improving teaching and learning.

Aims of Teaching and Learning at Oakwood:

Inspire – Impact – Independence



The aim of Teaching and Learning at Oakwood is to provide high-quality education that **inspires** young people, positively **impacts** their learning and development, and fosters **independence** in preparation for their future lives.

Policy Development (How)

The policy has been developed through:

- Review and evaluation of the 2025/26 Teaching & Learning Action Plan.
- Adoption of the Trust Teaching & Learning Framework and accompanying booklet.
- Findings from quality assurance activities and school improvement reviews.
- Collaboration with the wider Trust to implement the StepLab professional development approach.

Teaching & Learning – Rationale

Our approach to Teaching & Learning is underpinned by a commitment to providing consistently high-quality education that meets the diverse needs of pupils within our specialist setting.

Through a shared, evidence-informed pedagogical framework, we aim to establish consistent teaching principles, develop a common professional language and strengthen classroom practice across the academy.

Effective instructional leadership, professional development and quality assurance ensure that teaching continues to evolve in response to pupils' needs, educational research and identified school improvement priorities.

Teaching & Learning Policy - Vision (Why)

Our vision is to establish a positive, collaborative culture in which all staff are committed to continually improving teaching and learning to secure the best possible outcomes for pupils.
We aim to achieve this through:

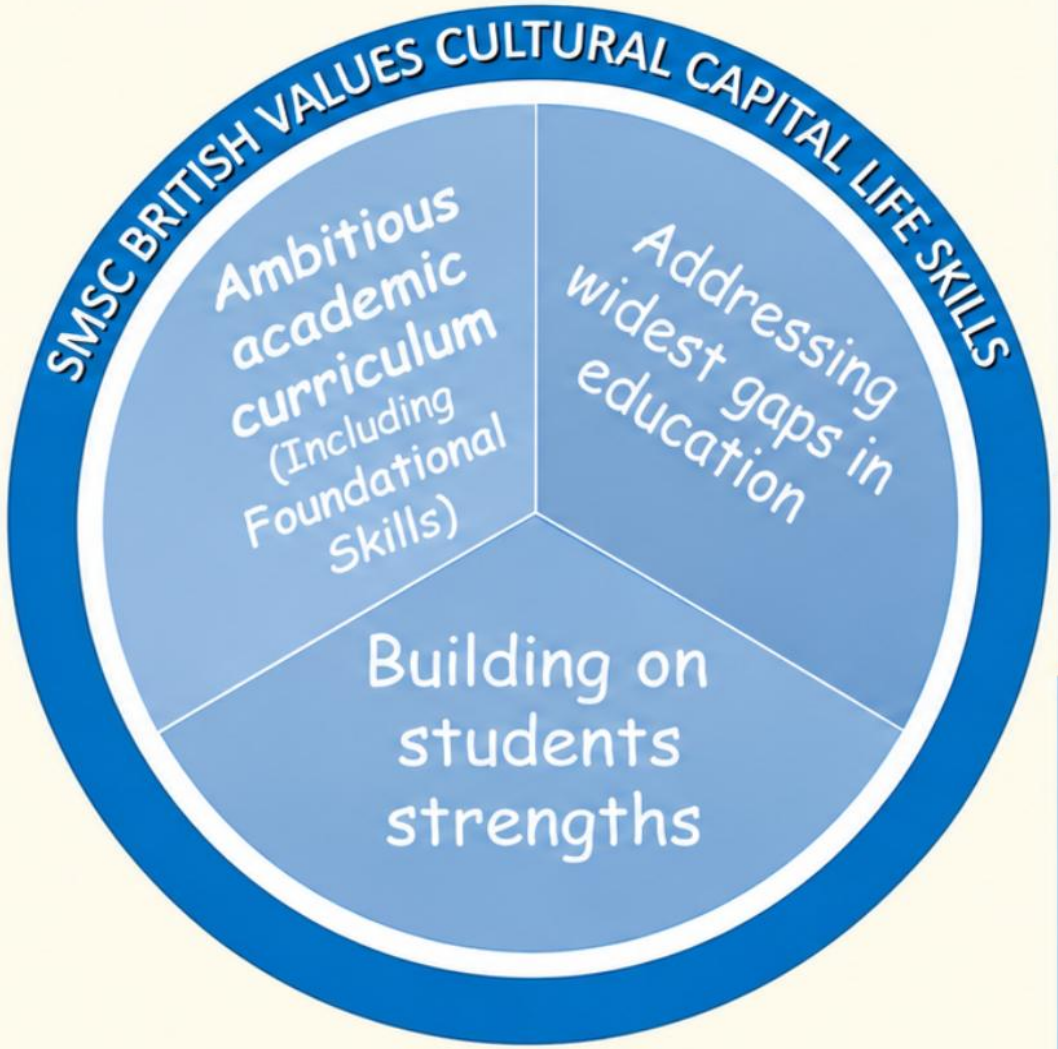
- **High expectations** – Ensuring all pupils experience ambitious, inclusive and appropriately challenging learning.

- **Consistent pedagogical practice** – Embedding the Trust Teaching & Learning Framework while recognising the importance of professional judgement and adaptive teaching.

- **Professional growth** – Developing a culture of reflection, collaboration and deliberate practice through StepLab.

- **Improved pupil outcomes** – Ensuring teaching promotes progress, confidence, communication and independence, preparing pupils for their future lives.

Main aims of the Oakwood curriculum



Provide an **ambitious academic curriculum,** including the development of **foundational skills**, so that students can access a wide range of qualifications that can support and impact on their further education and their employability.

To address pupils' widest gaps in education by developing **foundational skills**, including early reading, phonics, handwriting, literacy and numeracy. These essential skills will be developed and reinforced across both core and foundation subjects, preparing pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life.

To ensure that we have a **broad and balanced offer** for our students to build upon students strengths and interests to inspire them to hold high aspirations for their future.

To develop our students' **cultural capital**, for us this is providing students with the opportunities to experience people, places and things that contribute towards the essential knowledge that pupils need in order to be educated citizens. To promote pupils' physical health and personal development which includes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental development of pupils at the school in order to **prepare our students for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life**.

The guiding principles of our curriculum

Inclusion focus

- All pupils should see themselves represented and celebrated through the curriculum. This includes recognising diverse backgrounds, experiences and abilities, ensuring that learning is inclusive, accessible and relevant to our school community.

Appropriate content

- Curriculum content is carefully selected to reflect pupils' starting points, individual needs and aspirations. Learning is appropriately ambitious, informed by assessment and designed to develop the knowledge and skills required for future learning and independence.

Locality

- Where appropriate, curriculum content reflects our local community, its history, culture and influential figures. This helps pupils develop cultural capital, make meaningful connections and understand the world around them.

Evidence-informed curriculum design

- Our curriculum is informed by educational research and the science of learning, ensuring that knowledge and skills are carefully selected, sequenced and revisited to support long-term learning.

Knowledge – concepts and context

- Developing secure foundational knowledge.
- Building understanding of key concepts.
- Connecting new learning to prior knowledge.

Sequencing

- Carefully sequenced knowledge and skills.
- Building progressively on prior learning.
- Reinforcing foundational skills across subjects.

Making connections across subjects

- Making meaningful connections between subjects.
- Applying knowledge and skills in different contexts.
- Supporting retention and transfer of learning.

Our Shared Pedagogical Approach

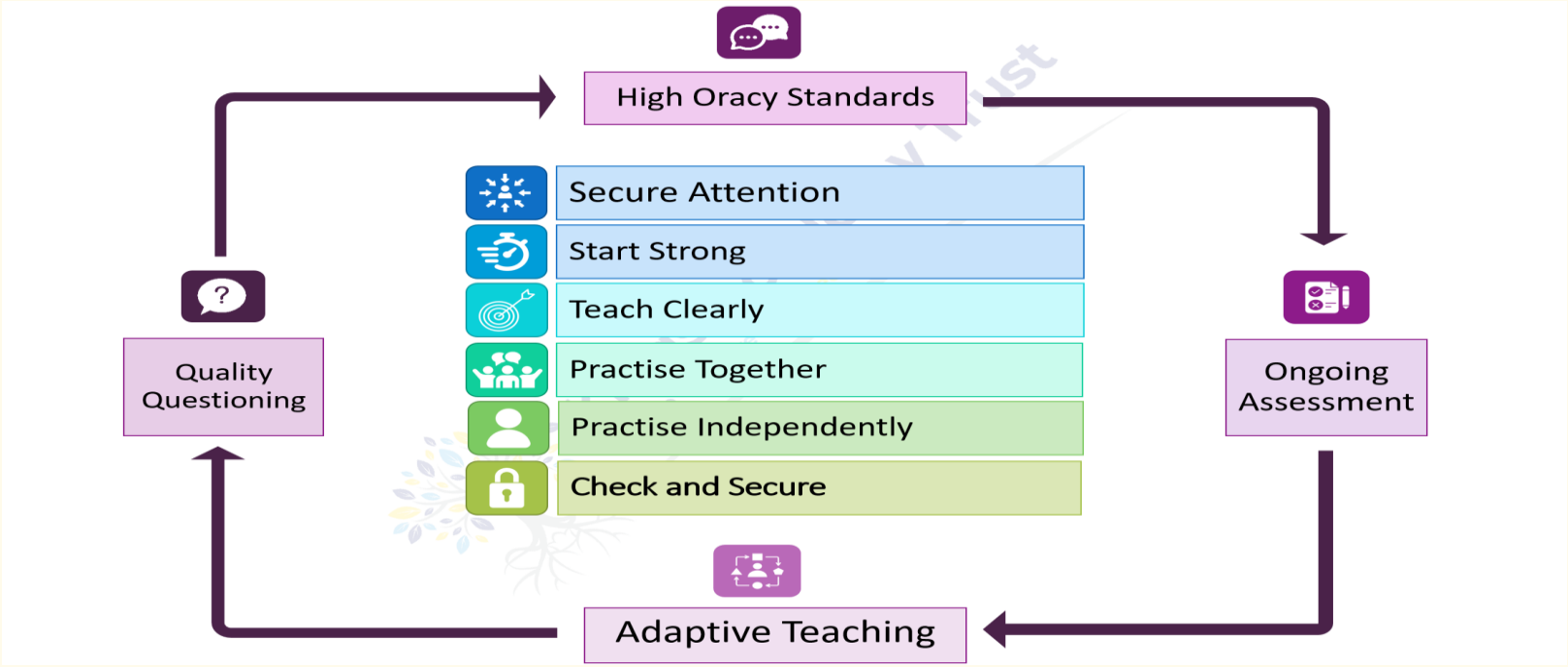
Our Teaching & Learning approach has been developed collaboratively across the Trust to establish a consistent, evidence-informed framework for high-quality teaching within our specialist schools.

Drawing predominantly on **StepLab**, alongside selected strategies from *Teach Like a Champion* and Trust-developed practices, the framework reflects the diverse needs of our pupils and the specialist contexts in which we teach.

Our **Trust Teaching & Learning Booklet** identifies six core phases of effective teaching, supported by four overarching principles that underpin classroom practice.

The framework provides a shared pedagogical language and clear expectations, while recognising the importance of professional judgement and adaptive teaching in meeting pupils' individual needs.

The Trust Teaching & Learning Booklet provides detailed guidance and practical strategies within each teaching strand. These are applied flexibly, informed by professional judgement, curriculum requirements and pupils' individual learning and communication needs.



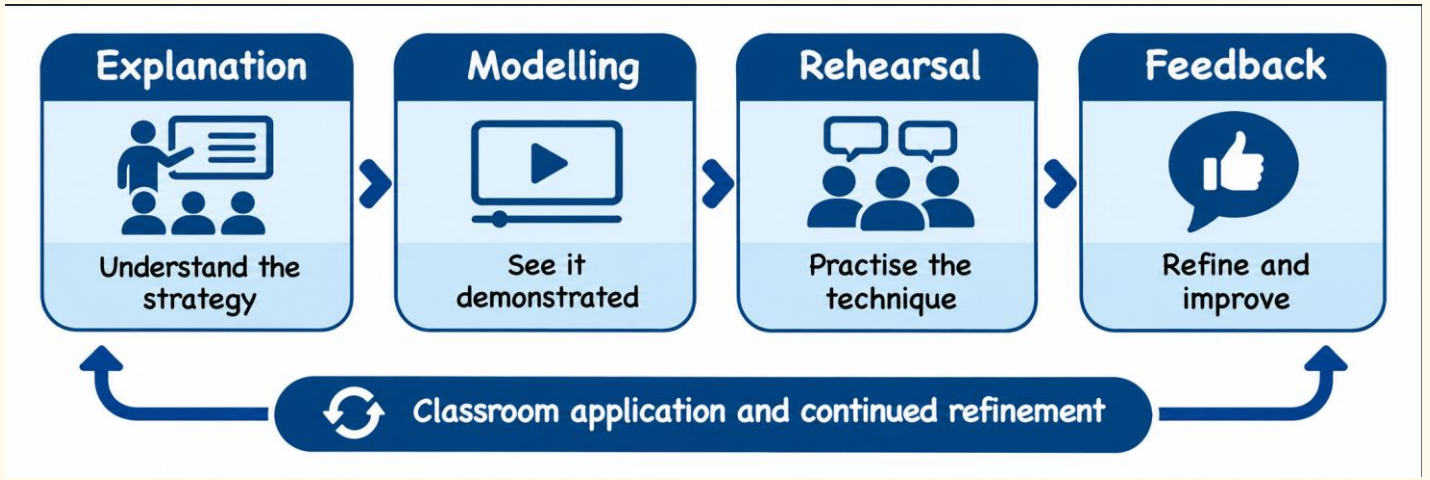
StepLab – Developing Teaching Practice

At Oakwood Academy, **StepLab** provides a structured, evidence-informed approach to professional development, supporting staff to continually improve the quality and consistency of teaching.

Our professional development programme is closely aligned with the **Trust Teaching & Learning Framework**, ensuring that staff develop a shared understanding of effective teaching strategies and how these can be adapted to meet the needs of pupils within our specialist setting.

During **2026/27, our focus is Group Professional Development**, delivered primarily through our weekly Wednesday CPD sessions. Staff engage collaboratively in a cycle of explanation, modelling, rehearsal and feedback, providing opportunities to practise and refine specific teaching techniques before applying them in the classroom.

This approach promotes a culture of continuous improvement, where professional learning is purposeful, supportive and focused on developing classroom practice.



Quality Assurance and Continuous Improvement

We use a range of quality assurance activities to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning, identify strengths and areas for development, and inform our professional development and school improvement priorities.

Department Health Checks

A structured review of curriculum, teaching, learning and assessment to secure consistency, quality and progress across subjects.

Lesson Visits

Focused, collaborative visits to explore the use of our pedagogical approach and identify effective practice and next steps.

Work Scrutiny

Evaluating pupils' work to consider progression, application of knowledge and the impact of teaching over time.

Other QA Activities

A range of approaches, including pupil voice, learning walks and targeted reviews, providing a broader view of the pupil experience.

Driving Improvement

Identify key findings

Inform professional development (StepLab)

Target subject and whole-school priorities

Monitor impact and evaluate improvement

Roles and Responsibilities – Teaching & Learning

High-quality teaching and learning is a shared responsibility across Oakwood Academy. All staff play a vital role in implementing our Trust Teaching & Learning Framework, maintaining high expectations and supporting pupils to achieve their full potential.

Through effective leadership, collaboration and ongoing professional development, we aim to ensure a consistent, inclusive and evidence-informed approach to teaching that promotes pupil progress, engagement and independence.

Senior Leaders

- Provide strategic direction for teaching and learning.
- Lead quality assurance, evaluate impact and identify school improvement priorities.
- Ensure professional development is aligned with identified needs.

Heads of Department

- Lead curriculum implementation and teaching standards within their subjects.
- Monitor quality through Department Health Checks and other QA activities.
- Support staff development and share effective practice.

Teachers

- Deliver ambitious, inclusive and appropriately adapted teaching.
- Apply the Trust Teaching & Learning Framework using professional judgement.
- Engage actively in StepLab, reflection and professional development.

Teaching Assistants

- Support the implementation of teaching strategies and individual learning needs.
- Promote pupil engagement, communication and independence.
- Work collaboratively with teachers and engage in relevant professional development.